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**Sent:** 1/25/2016 10:36:42 PM  
**To:** Peterson, Cynthia [Peterson.Cynthia@epa.gov]; Cirian, Mike [Cirian.Mike@epa.gov]  
**CC:** Jon Tester1 [senator@tester.senate.gov]; Ryan Zinke [ryanzinke@yahoo.com]; Steve Bullock [governor@mt.gov]; Gary Krueger [gkrueger@flathead.mt.gov]; Joe Russell [jrussell@flathead.mt.gov]  
**Subject:** Three Op-Eds about CFAC EPA Superfund cleanup

To: Cynthia Peterson and Mike Cirian, PE of EPA, Region 8. Here are my comments you requested. There are others I have published, and more to come until I see concerted action with a sense of urgency...as time is of the essence. All the kumbaya CFAC EPA Superfund Community Liaison Panel meetings you are holding with Mary Green as moderator are worthless unless the cleanup is completed pronto. Read below...

## **CFAC pollution could be the next 'Libby'**

**Missoulian**

**June 18, 2015**

**BILL BAUM**

This is my third attempt at trying to inspire common ordinary citizens to quit being apathetic and take responsibility for your own lives by mobilizing and taking action.

The Columbia Falls Aluminum Company (CFAC) pollution still lies in the ground and in the water table you drink from and bathe in ... from Columbia Falls all the way downstream along the Flathead River to Flathead Lake ... having a deep underground hydrological affect on thousands of personal, individual, unprotected wells along the way. This dangerous situation has become another "Libby."

One thing has changed though: Local government's elected and appointed officials and local business people have become active in participating in monthly meetings, finally, but only in order to lend their names to pleasing voters or increasing commerce for their respective businesses. It's all for show.

It is why I bypass bothering to contact them and elevate my criticism to county, state, and federal elected and appointed officials. But those people do not live in the area and are safe from the threat to their health ... and so have no sense of danger.

There is much being written about all the "red tape" and "jumping through hoops" that must precede a multi-years cleanup: slow, laborious, field investigations to PROVE there is death-causing contamination; then feasibility studies and remedial work plans; road maps and comprehensive assessments; evaluation of alternatives; endless, mindless meetings to forestall commencement of the cleanup itself.

What has not changed is a lack of urgency, with time being of the essence, to save human lives and wildlife. People will lose years at the end of their lives due to this inaction. Mother Nature never intended these toxic (poisonous) chemicals (cyanide, fluoride, arsenic, lead, manganese, et al) to be inside our bodies and we cannot effectively metabolize and eliminate them.

Be proactive, go ask your doctor. And then start attending the monthly meetings at Freedom Bank in Columbia Falls on Highway 2, on the second Thursday at 6:30 p.m. in the basement conference room. Be feisty, ...raise hell, ...live a long time.

To date, I have received a personal letter from our governor, Steve Bullock, promising to enter the fray and participate in obtaining federal Environmental Protection Agency Superfunding to solve the cleanup project effort.

He followed up and did so, but it cost me his friendship for embarrassing him publicly with my newspaper oped goading him into it. (What else was I to do since my e-mails to him are screened and filtered from him seeing them?)

I also met with U.S. Congressman Ryan Zinke, who admonished the federal EPA Superfund approach, as he prefers to allow the Montana Department of Environmental Quality to spearhead the cleanup, claiming they would be more effective.

His reasoning is that he doesn't want to adversely affect local property values and cause a "black eye" for attracting businesses to the Columbia Falls area if it has a Superfund label stigma. Human and wildlife health and longevity would have to become secondary to commerce. (It is the Republican way of doing business.)

In the meantime, from the safety of my own homestead many miles upstream along the Flathead River, I do continue to commute to work and recreate in Columbia Falls ...but always bring bottled water to drink and go home to shower after gym workouts. "God helps those who help themselves."

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*Bill Baum writes from Badrock Canyon and upstream from Columbia Falls.*

## Will Columbia Falls be another Libby?

**Missoulain**

**Posted: December 30, 2014 11:27 am**

**Published: December 31, 2014**

**by Bill Baum**

This is my third Op-Ed on this subject trying to warn the local citizenry about the serious dangers to their health and well-being from drinking and bathing in water that has been polluted from the Columbia Falls Aluminum Company (CFAC) operation, even though the operation is currently closed since 2009.

The first articles didn't raise much concern from typically apathetic people too busy living their lives to look after themselves, so I'll try again. If you do not complain, the government will not take action, as happened in 2012. That is their standard operating procedure. Community involvement is a requirement in establishing funding priorities.

There was another public meeting sponsored by the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) held December 11, 2014 in the auditorium at Columbia Falls High School (CFHS). Some local government and political luminaries made this meeting, but not many local residents (along Cedar Creek and the Flathead River from Columbia Falls to Flathead Lake) filled the huge

auditorium, or Governor Steve Bullock who I was expecting to attend, since he wrote to me personally, after my first critical Op-Ed was published, and indicated he is concerned for the safety of local residents.

I am not allotted enough space here to repeat everything I said in the earlier June 25, and August 8, 2014 Op-Eds but they can be searched out on-line at the Daily Inter Lake and Missoulian websites by my name, and are worth reading.

Nothing has changed. Time is still of the essence but there is still a lack of a sense of urgency from government employees who live in far away Helena and Denver who do not have to drink the local water or bathe in it.

This current meeting (December 11, 2014) seemed to be for the benefit of those government employees to illuminate the complications in getting past the extreme red tape of multiple government entities, and current and former owners of the aluminum plant, to cooperate, collaborate, and organize their efforts in funding a clean-up of the nasty, dangerous pollutants: Cyanide; fluoride; arsenic; lead; sodium; mercury; 10 others; et al.; that have been found in water well-testing in the area. They claim their government biologists/toxicologists think the pollution levels are below “screening levels” standards but, of course, they do not have to live here with it. Even so, they do admit the well-testing must continue at heightened levels. (Can we trust them with our lives? Think Libby.)

All-in-all, the locals and news media attending appeared to be overly cooperative with DEQ and EPA personnel and displayed cordiality and civility that belie the critical nature of the danger to humans and aquatic, land, and airborne wildlife that persists here. I was my usual demanding self and pushed hard for immediate action, but to no avail...this is a problem that might take decades to fix. Think Libby.

The list of excuses, alibis, and government red tape is only outdone by the list of capitalistic greed and property rights arguments on behalf of the aluminum companies of record involved since 1955: ARCO; CFAC; Glencore; et al. It would require too much space here to list the incredibly time-consuming consultant assessments, remedial investigation feasibility studies, and solutions and decision criteria for various state and federal funding opportunities. Check [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov).

My personal recommended solution: Fix the problem immediately, and then worry about who pays for it in a court of law. It will sort itself out. Save lives. Don't let this become another Libby...where over a long period of time the death toll is still mounting.

*Bill Baum, Badrock Canyon, living 12 miles upstream of the problem but spends much time in Columbia Falls*

## **Drink up — all it can do is kill you**

**Posted: Sunday, June 22, 2014 10:46 am**

**Hungry Horse News**

**By Bill Baum**

Not feeling any urgency to save lives from the pollution from the Columbia Falls Aluminum Company, two of the Flathead County commissioners and the governor of Montana, the Department of Environmental Quality, and Environmental Protection Agency, nothing is getting done with any haste to acquire Superfund monies to clean up the mess.

The new owners of CFAC, Glencore AG, could care less as it is saving them money. Their claim of contribution is to pass the obligation to the former owner, Atlantic Richfield and BP. And of course, there are the ridiculous findings from well tests, reported to U.S. Sen. Jon Tester, that no significant pollution was found. Not much social license here.

After all, what harm can drinking cyanide, fluoride, arsenic, lead, manganese, etc. from your tap water possibly do? Well, for starters, given enough time, it can kill you. Not to worry though, the EPA, governor of Montana, two Flathead County commissioners, Glencore and DEQ don't live here and so don't have to drink this water — and CFAC is long gone from the scene.

So who does care? Apparently neither the residents of Columbia Falls nor the thousands who live along Cedar Creek and the Flathead River corridor clear down to Flathead Lake with personal, individual wells, since none of these stakeholders is squawking very much. We wouldn't want to interfere with Glencore's property rights now, would we?

I guess I shouldn't care since I live many miles upstream of the toxic poison in the water, but I will raise this red flag and inform the apathetic citizenry that they don't have long to live. Maybe they should have studied physics and chemistry and hydrology in school?

So, drink up, take a bath or shower, and we'll see you in the next lifetime in a parallel universe.

*Bill Baum*

*Coram*

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